

CLEG: Creating a Low Wage Worker Advancement Strategy Subcommittee
June 5, 2005 onsite meeting at Focus: HOPE

Attendance:

Mitch Tomlinson, CLEG Vice Chair, Peckham Inc.
Sharon Parks, Michigan League for Human Services
Frank Lopez, Aztec Manufacturing
Patricia Simmons, Sault Ste. Marie Housing Commission
Marianne Udow, Department of Human Services
Janet Joseph, Dunnage Engineering
Hubert Price Jr., Synergistics Consulting
Jeannine LaPrad, CSW
Taryn MacFarlane, CSW

Mitch opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending.

JET update-

Marianne gave a short update on the JET pilot program. Implementation is proceeding in the four pilot sites. There was discussion about what the legislature is planning to do, but no decisions have been made yet.

Poverty simulation update-

Mitch shared that the target date for the simulation mid summer and he is working with the Capital Area Michigan Works Agency to set a date. He gave an overview of what a poverty simulation is. Hosting the poverty simulation is the committee's mechanism to engage employers in retention and advancement issues and strategies for low wagedworkers. The group also talked about the importance of having employers with poverty background at the simulation. Mitch had shared the idea with other committee members earlier in the day and Matt Chambers, who had personal experience with poverty, though it was a great idea.

Employer toolkit update-

Mitch asked Jeannine and Taryn from CSW to provide an update on this document. Following the poverty simulation, employers will be provided with a toolkit that will provide brief descriptions and links to key public and private resources to help their low-wage/low-skilled workforce build assets. The contents will be grouped into different sections such as financial, education, or health assets, with information on various programs in each section. Suggestions for how employers can support employee access to these asset-building strategies will be included. The underlying assumption is that employers can reduce absenteeism and turnover, and improve productivity and stability in their workforce via asset-building strategies.

Frank suggested including information about the MEDC's tax incentive program for hiring workers (the EDJT program). Hubert talked about including childcare information, which can lead to improved employee retention. The group agreed that this toolkit should align with the work of the Re-accelerating Employment Committee's Business Solutions document/work. The group talked about the importance of framing the toolkit as a way to help employers.

Marianne Udow asked if legislators would be invited to the poverty simulation. Mitch had decided to keep it employer focused to keep it neutral, but certainly, we could look into hosting another one for legislators as a group.

Next meeting: August 16, 10-11am.